

Unit 2: Riding the Wave

4th Grade ELA

44 Class Meetings

Revised June 2026

Essential Questions

- How do authors use literary techniques to create suspense and develop theme?
- How do characters change in response to conflict and adversity?
- How does analyzing multiple texts deepen our understanding of a topic?

Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals

EU 1: Authors develop characters through actions, dialogue, thoughts, and responses to conflict.

- Describe how Kyle and Bee change throughout the novel.
- Analyze how characters respond to danger and uncertainty.
- Use text evidence to explain character motivations and growth.

EU 2: Authors use structure and literary techniques to build suspense and develop theme.

- Identify how chapters end with cliffhangers.
- Analyze how pacing, word choice, and dialogue build tension.
- Determine themes such as responsibility, courage, survival, and family.

EU 3: Readers synthesize information from literary and informational texts to build a deeper understanding of real-world events.

- Analyze how *Escaping the Giant Wave* incorporates scientific concepts about tsunamis.
- Compare how authors present information in literary and informational texts.
- Integrate information from multiple sources to explain natural disasters and preparedness.

Standards

Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.3: Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.5: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.5: Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9: Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.a: Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.b: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.c: Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., *another*, *for example*, *also*, *because*).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.d: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2.e: Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.6: With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.8: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information and provide a list of sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.a: Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.b: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.c: Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1.d: Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.2: Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud, or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.3: Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.

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ISAAC Vision of the Graduate Competencies

Competency 1: Write effectively for a variety of purposes.

Competency 2: Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner.

Competency 3: Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team.

Competency 4: Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively.

Competency 5: Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community.

Unit Content Overview

1. Character Development & Perspective

- Investigate how Kyle's internal thoughts vs. external actions reflect him as a character
- Analyze Bee's growth in confidence throughout the novel
- Determine how conflict reveals character

2. Author's Craft

- Determine character development through events of survival and quick decision-making
- Investigate themes of responsibility and maturity
- Analyze how the setting contributes to conflict and suspense
- Identify how authors use pacing, foreshadowing, chapter structure, and cliffhangers to build suspense

3. Non-fiction Connections

- Determine what causes a tsunami
- Analyze warning signs and safety procedures around natural disasters
- Compare fictional events with real science

Vocabulary and Key Terms: tsunami, earthquake, tremor, aftershock, epicenter, magnitude, seismic waves, fault line, seismograph, natural disaster, evacuation, emergency, warning system, warning siren, evacuation route, shelter, survival, rescue, emergency kit, disaster preparedness, coastline, harbor, wave, ocean, flooding, debris, destruction, impact, danger, responsibility, bravery, courage, panic, relief, survival instinct, conflict, internal conflict, external conflict, character, character traits, character development, motivation, dialogue, narrator, point of view, perspective, setting, plot, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, suspense, tension, cliffhanger, theme, inference, evidence, text evidence, prediction, summary, sequence of events, cause and effect, problem and solution, main idea, key details, context clues, vocabulary, domain-specific vocabulary, informational text, fiction, nonfiction, research, source, note-taking, paraphrase, explanation, analysis, claim, response, introduction, body paragraph, conclusion, transition words, revise, edit, draft, publish, compare, contrast, structure, heading, subheading, topic sentence, supporting details, sensory details

Interdisciplinary Connection:

Humanities, Science

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Daily Learning Objectives with TWPS

Students will be able to...

- Activate background knowledge about natural disasters.
 - *What do you already know about tsunamis?*
- Analyze how an author introduces characters through dialogue, actions, and thoughts.
 - *What do you already know about Beebee and her character? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.*
- Make inferences about character relationships using textual evidence.
 - *Reread page 19. What clues show what Kyle's mom knows—or doesn't know—about Kyle's relationship with Daren? Explain your inference.*
- Identify character traits and support them with evidence.
 - *How would you describe Kyle's character? Use evidence from the text to support your character traits.*
- Explain how point of view influences what readers learn about characters.
 - *How does seeing events from Kyle's perspective affect your understanding of the story?*
- Analyze how conflict reveals character.
 - *What conflict is Kyle facing at this point? What does his response reveal about him?*
- Analyze how authors build suspense through pacing and chapter structure.
 - *How does the author build suspense in the first five chapters?*
- Identify examples of foreshadowing and explain their purpose.
 - *What clues suggest that something dangerous may happen later in the story?*
- Explain how dialogue develops characters and conflict.
 - *What does the conversation between Kyle and Daren reveal about their relationship?*
- Analyze how setting contributes to conflict.
 - *How does the setting create challenges for Kyle and Beebee?*
- Determine a central idea using evidence from the text.
 - *After reading Chapters 6 and 7, what do you believe is the central idea or theme of these chapters?*
- Analyze how repetition contributes to meaning and suspense.
 - *What repetition do you notice in Chapter 8? How does it impact the reader?*
- Explain how a character's thoughts differ from their actions.
 - *How do Kyle's internal thoughts compare to the choices he makes?*
- Analyze how characters respond to uncertainty.
 - *How does Kyle react when plans begin to fall apart? What does this reveal about him?*
- Compare the responses of two characters facing the same situation.

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- *How do Kyle and Beebee respond differently to danger?*
- Explain how an author's word choice creates tension.
 - *Which words or phrases make this chapter feel suspenseful?*
- Evaluate character decisions using evidence.
 - *At this point in the novel, Kyle is forced to make a series of important decisions. Which one is most critical? Why?*
- Analyze how events influence character growth.
 - *How has Kyle changed since the beginning of the novel?*
- Determine how secondary characters contribute to the plot.
 - *How does Daren influence Kyle's choices and growth?*
- Analyze the role of responsibility in a story.
 - *What responsibilities does Kyle take on that he did not have earlier in the novel?*
- Evaluate a character's decision-making in a crisis.
 - *Which decision demonstrates the most maturity from Kyle? Explain.*
- Analyze how chapter endings create suspense.
 - *How does the author use cliffhangers to encourage readers to continue reading?*
- Compare a character at two different points in the story.
 - *How is Beebee different now than she was at the beginning of the novel?*
- Analyze how relationships change over time.
 - *How has Kyle's relationship with Beebee changed throughout the story?*
- Evaluate multiple solutions to a problem.
 - *Should Norm have stayed with Josie or should he have gone with Kyle and Beebee? Why do you think this?*
- Determine how setting intensifies conflict.
 - *How does the tsunami change the setting and create new obstacles?*
- Identify themes emerging from events in the story.
 - *Which theme is becoming most important: responsibility, courage, survival, or family? Explain.*
- Explain how characters demonstrate courage.
 - *Which character shows the greatest courage in the novel so far?*
- Analyze how a character's actions contribute to theme.
 - *How do Kyle's actions help develop the theme of responsibility?*
- Compare character growth across the novel.
 - *Which character do you believe changed the most through the course of the novel, Daren or Kyle? Why?*
- Evaluate decisions made during survival situations.
 - *Kyle made many big decisions regarding his and Beebee's safety; which do you think*

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was the most important?

- Determine how an author develops a theme over time.
 - *How has the author developed the theme of family throughout the novel?*
- Symbolism and figurative meanings within a text.
 - *The title of this novel could have two meanings. What do you think they could be?*
- Synthesize information from a literary text and an informational text.
 - *How accurately does the novel portray a tsunami compared to the informational article?*
- Compare how different texts present information.
 - *What information about tsunamis is easier to learn from the nonfiction text? What is easier to understand from the novel?*
- Synthesize information from multiple texts to explain a topic.
 - *How do the literary and informational texts work together to deepen your understanding of tsunamis?*
- Determine the most important theme of a text and support my thinking with evidence.
 - *What is the most important lesson Kyle learns throughout the novel?*
- Analyze how an author develops character, theme, and suspense across an entire novel.
 - *How do Kyle's growth, the tsunami setting, and the suspenseful structure work together to communicate the author's message?*

Instructional Strategies/Differentiated Instruction

- Whole group instruction
- Paragraph frames and sentence starters
- Teacher modeling
- Think-write-pair-share and small-group discussions
- Graphic organizers
- Accountable talk
- Homework
- Word walls with visuals
- Small group instruction
- Visual exemplars with teacher and student critiques
- Text and video chunking
- Spiraling back to guiding questions
- Multiple CFUs
- Close reading with text-dependent questions

EL Differentiation Strategies

- Word Banks and Word Walls with visuals
- TWPS (Think, write, pair, share)
- Pre-reading strategies

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- Culturally responsive teaching
- Explicit teacher modeling
- Key vocabulary
- Graphic organizers
- Strategic Grouping
- Non-verbal assessments

Assessments

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Do Now
- Academic Discourse
- Exit Slips
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Completed notes
- Completed graphic organizers
- Homework
 - Performance Task -- “Natural Disaster Investigative Unit”
 - Teacher’s rubric/scoring guide

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:

- Quiz: Character Development, Author’s Craft, Non-Fiction Connections (EU1, EU2, and EU3)
- IAB
- Unit Task: “Natural Disaster Investigative Unit” (EU1, EU2 and EU3)

Unit Task

Unit Task Name: “Natural Disaster Investigative Unit”

Description: Upon completing the novel *Escaping the Giant Wave*, students will enter a Natural Disaster Investigative Unit as the lead investigators. Students will have to investigate the characters throughout the novel, interpret the author’s craft and recreate sections of the novel, and connect non-fiction text to what they’ve learned (EU1, EU2, EU3).

Evaluation: Teacher’s Scoring Guide

Unit Resources

- NewEla
- Google Classroom
- *Escaping the Giant Wave* Novel
- Student Journal
- Student Comprehension Packet